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FARM LABOR PROGRAM FOR WHEAT AND SMALL GRAIN HARVEST IN GREAT PLAINS STATES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UTILIZATION OF MIGRATORY WORKERS IN 1945

By

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The wheat and small grain harvest program was designed to cover major producing areas in the States of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, and North Dakota. The approximate acreage of wheat in this area to be harvested was 43,500,000 acres. The acreage of small grain, principally oats and barley, with some rye and flax, was approximately 21,500,000 acres.

The harvesting of this vast acreage of grain in nine States during the period of approximately May 25 to September 10 was a tremendous undertaking, with the shortage of manpower and machinery. Yet the job was done, and one of the biggest harvests in the history of the Western Plains States was accomplished without the loss of grain because of an inadequate supply of labor or machinery.

Assistance and Coordination between States -

Obviously with such a vast program, assistance and coordination between the States was needed especially in the determination of the needs for out-of-State men, combines, and trucks. Consequently early in the year each of the States was asked to submit to the Washington Extension Farm Labor Office information concerning their harvest dates, principal highways over which combines traveled, and ports of entry or contact points where harvesters would be directed.

With this information, a map (Figure 1) of the entire area was prepared dividing the 373 counties into 35 areas, usually about 10 to 15 counties in an area. The approximate date that the harvest usually commences and acreage of wheat and other small grains to be harvested were shown. The percentage of the crop usually combined was also indicated by areas. These areas were referred to between States in indicating needs and direction of harvest help, but within the States workers were directed to counties.

These maps were distributed to each of the State farm labor offices, who in turn distributed them to county offices and to port of entry stations where they could be given to combine operators, truckers and individual harvest hands. This gave the harvest workers a picture of the entire harvest area. Hundreds of comments were made expressing appreciation for this assistance. The migrant harvest workers and the custom combine and truck operators were referred to the county agent or farm labor office in each county for current information.

State and District Offices -

The program functioned during the actual harvest season through State and district offices set up by the Extension Service. In all cases, the Extension Service cooperated with the Agricultural Adjustment Agency, the Office of Defense Transportation, the Office of Price Administration, implement dealers, and other groups interested in the planning and execution of the program. The extension farm labor offices, after conference with other agencies, took the lead in organizing and carrying out this cooperative harvest labor program in all the States, except Montana and North Dakota where the Agricultural Adjustment Agency handled the direction of the custom combine operators.

In Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska, State and district offices were temporarily located in wheat and small grain areas, usually near the centers of activity. In Texas, this office was at Plainview; in Oklahoma at Clinton, with a suboffice at Enid. Kansas handled their entire program out of the office at Great Bend, while Nebraska set up an office at McCook to handle their earlier harvest in the south central part of the State, later moving their office to Alliance to handle the western end of the State. The work necessary in Colorado and Wyoming was handled directly through local county agent offices. South Dakota handled the shocking, threshing, and combining labor for the eastern part of the State through their State office at Brookings, and their program in the combine areas in the central and western parts of the State through district offices at Pierre and Rapid City: Montana and North Dakota both handled their harvest labor programs from their State offices located at Bozeman and Fargo, respectively.

In each of the States, crop and weather conditions in the counties, their needs and supplies of machines and men were reported weekly or twice a week to the State and district offices for a week or two before actual harvesting started. When harvest started these reports usually were sent in daily by telegraph or telephone. The State and district offices then used this information in directing custom combine and truck operators and men to the counties and areas where needed. Most of the States prepared daily reports that were sent to all county agents in their respective States, and to State and district offices in adjoining States. These daily letters contained information, for counties in the State and for areas in adjoining States, concerning the progress of the harvest and the need for and supply of harvest help. This procedure greatly facilitated the orderly movement of harvest help northward across the nine-State area.

Harvesting Methods

For a considerable number of years, the biggest percentage of the wheat in this area has been harvested by combines. Since the beginning of the war an increasing number of custom combines have been needed and used. The acreage has been expanding, the yields have been good, large numbers of old combines have worn out, fewer new machines were available, and there were fewer individual harvest hands. In addition, an increasing number of farmers have been planting wheat or larger acreages of wheat expecting to have it harvested by custom combines. Information secured by the Economics Department of Kansas State College indicates that compared with owning machinery, the hiring of custom combines is probably more economical for the small producer than for the farmer who grows 500 or more acres of wheat. Their opinion is that the practice of custom combining will increase in the future. Additional information is needed and studies should be made on a comparison of the costs of custom combining and the use of individual home-owned equipment.

During 1945 there were a greater number of self-propelled combines making the harvest than in any previous year and farmers, if possible, would hire one of these newer machines. The bigger operators were always looking for the biggest jobs. However, the custom operators who would take a 160 to 200 acre job did more actual cutting, and spent less time on the road and waiting for the right condition to cut.

Rates for Harvesting

The rate ranged from $2.50 on a straight acreage basis in parts of Texas, where there was a temporary surplus of combines, to a few scattered instances of $7.00 per acre on some "down" wheat in wet areas in Kansas. In all instances, the agreement on price was made between the wheat grower and combine operator. The commonest wage throughout the area was $3.50 and $4.00 per acre with many agreements made on a $3.00 to $3.50 per acre basis, with an additional 5¢ per bushel over 20 bushels yield per acre.

Most of the combine outfits had trucks and sufficient men to run their own outfits and to haul the wheat. Many of the agreements for custom work were to cut the wheat, and haul to the bin or to the elevator. Trucking costs were generally 5¢ per bushel for the first five miles or less, plus ½¢ per bushel per mile over five miles.

Wages for individual harvest hands in the combine areas ranged from $8 to $12 per day for tractor and truck drivers, with some skilled combine operators receiving $12 to $15 per day. Usually, however, the farmer himself or the custom combine operator ran the combine and hired only drivers.

Combine and Truck Operations

Some custom combine operators and truckers were making this type of work their business, however, the majority of them were farmers who came down to Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, from the northern States and followed the harvest back to their own harvest; or were farmers who went on north after finishing their own harvest.

The combine operators and men in making this harvest usually secured work from one to three weeks in an area. An average twelve-foot combine will cut 30 to 40 acres a day and with good conditions will cut around 500 to 600 acres during each stop. When a job of this kind is finished in an area the harvest has moved on and the usual jump between jobs is about 200 to 250 miles. A combine operator will harvest wheat or small grain in three or four areas from Texas to Montana and the Dakotas. The individual harvest hands follow about the same pattern in making the harvest.

Individual Harvest Hands

The individual harvest hands used in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and Nebraska, came into these States from 20 to 25 different States. Perhaps the majority of them coming from Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri where wet spring weather in areas of these States had delayed or ruined their crops. The majority of the workers were men with farm experience, actually living on farms or in small towns. Quite a number of war plant workers made the harvest this year, and a large number of boys from 16 to 18 years of age. The latter group, however, was not as acceptable to the farmers as older more experienced workers.

In general, the number of combines and men about equaled the demand all the way from Texas to Montana and the Dakotas in the combine area, with the exception of some areas in central, South and North Dakota where combines with pickup attachments were needed.

Difficulties Encountered

There were occasional spots in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas where, early in the season or due to delayed harvesting conditions, there were surpluses of trucks, combines, and men, but they gradually thinned out as the harvest progressed north. During the same time there were shortages in north central Kansas and Nebraska due to wet fields with down grain and because of small acreages to be cut.

All custom combine and truck operators were urged before starting out to provide themselves with tires, and most of them did, but some time was lost due to inability to get their permits and to locate tires when an emergency occurred. Housing was not much of a difficulty because they stayed in the towns while on the road, and many of the machine operators carried their own bedding and slept in their trucks. When working on a job, the farmer usually provided lodging. A few operators took their own trailers as living quarters.

The greatest difficulty encountered was the lack of adequate food. This shortage did not occur when crews were fed on the farms where they were working. However, at the height of the harvest season, when hundreds of men were passing through, and with some combine crews on jobs without board, local facilities in the towns were inadequate. This condition existed because many eating houses had closed, and rationing limited the supplies of meat.

Direction and Placement

It is estimated that about half of the operators had arranged for their jobs before starting out on custom work. Others obtained their jobs through the county agents or farm labor offices, or by hiring direct to farmers contacted on the road or in the towns. A large part of the individual harvest workers were placed through the farm labor offices.

Most of the combine operators and harvest hands traveled by the principal north and south highways, and it was sometimes difficult to get them into the counties off of these main highways.

More Individual Harvest Hands Needed in the Dakotas

The harvest of the small grain in this nine-State area, more or less, divides itself into two areas as far as the kind of labor required. In the eastern half of both South and North Dakota only about half of the small grain is combined, the balance being bound, shocked and threshed. This results in the need for thousands of individual harvest hands for shocking and threshing. Not many of the harvest workers who followed the harvests in the combine areas during the last few years have gone into this area. Although Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and Nebraska have been getting practically all the men they have needed, the supply dwindles out as they finish the harvest in Nebraska, or as the combine movement disperses north and west to Montana and western North Dakota.

During the war years, South Dakota and North Dakota have found it necessary to transport thousands of harvest workers under the farm labor program. These workers have to be recruited in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Tennessee, Missouri, and in 1945 a few were transported from Kansas and Nebraska. During all of the war years, however, there has been a free movement of workers into these areas from Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and always some from the south in the regular harvest movement.

The number of free migrant harvest workers in this area this year was larger than during the first war years, but in far less numbers than in prewar years. In these two States in 1945, as well as in the other war years, many more local people mobilized through local recruitment efforts assisted in the harvest. In fact, this is true of the entire

harvest area. These workers consisted of town men, women, and youth. Some would work for the duration of the harvest, while others would work as emergency crews in the evening and on Sundays and holidays.

State Reports

The following excerpts from the reports of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska regarding their 1945 harvest labor program give additional detail in regard to the procedures, methods, and results:

TEXAS 1945 SMALL GRAIN HARVEST

The cooperators in the Combine and Harvest Labor Program for the small grain and grain sorghum harvest included the Extension Service, Agricultural Adjustment Agency, Office of Defense Transportation, Office of Price Administration, implement dealers, and other groups interested in the planning and execution phases of the program. The Extension State Farm Labor Office, after conference with other agencies, took the lead in organizing and executing the cooperative Combine and Harvest Labor Program.

The District Farm Labor Office suggested cooperative county-wide planning as a basis for the development of the State-wide program of action. The planning work was participated in by members of the County Agricultural Victory Council, Agricultural Adjustment Agency committeemen, County War Board, and local representative of the Office of Price Administration, Office of Defense Transportation, and other organized groups. Surveys were made as to the acreages of grain seeded for harvest, number of combines available, number and amounts of outside combines and labor needed, number of the different kinds of labor available, and detail surveys as to needs of the different kinds of labor available, and detail surveys as to needs of gas, tires, and storage facilities. The results of county planning were used as a basis for developing the State program of action.

A careful analysis of the planning work conducted brought out the problems that confronted the District Farm Labor Office in the execution of the Harvest Program. These problems were as follows:

1. That there were three distinct grain growing areas with different maturity dates for the beginning of the harvest with overlapping on completion and beginning dates. (See map.) The 1945 variations from normal maturity dates further complicated the movement of combines and labor.

2. It was determined that there were 4,915,000 acres of wheat seeded; 1,310,000 acres of oats; 502,000 acres of barley.

3. Planning work indicated, further, that there were available in Texas a total of 5,373 large, 1,541 medium, and 4,647 small combines. Of this number only 496 of all sizes were available for custom work within Texas, while the need was for 2,587 outside combines to bring about an efficient harvest. Surveys indicated the needs were for 449 small combines, 1,125 medium combines, and 1,013 large combines. This survey made April 15 indicated there would be needed 3,427 trucks and pick-ups. 9,314 men would be needed to operate the combines, tractors and trucks, and 8,449 other harvest hands would be needed for Texas harvest.

4. There was a need for an adequate system for reports of needs and progress to and from county agents and the District Farm Labor Office and to and from other States.

5. There was a need for the use of field men to facilitate the movement of machines and labor, both in counties and the district office.

6. That a serious rail car shortage would develop in view of the large crop and shortage of farm storage space.

7. There was a need for an efficient system for the issuance of supplementary supplies of gasoline, tires, and repair parts.

The planning work on a State level dealt primarily with the movement of combines and labor between counties and areas. Also, the program dealt with the coordination of the work of all agencies concerned in the harvest program, the relationship of county, district, State and out-of-State offices. The State level planning also included the use of the Extension Editorial Office, radio stations throughout Texas, the farm press, and daily newspapers in its publicity program.

By the last week in May, it became apparent that in the western part of the High Plains area a considerable acreage had been abandoned because of drought and that yields would drop considerably below that previously anticipated. From these reports a revised report was given out from this office, giving the probable decrease in acres to be harvested in Texas. The indications were that harvested wheat acreage would drop from 4,915,000 to 3,578,000 acres, and likewise the number of combines, trucks, and labor needs would be materially decreased. Combine operators from long distances and States within the northern part of the United States were advised of the probable decrease in acres harvested and that it was doubtful, as of that date, if they would be needed in Texas.

This news traveled much more rapidly and further than anticipated and within a week we found the press and other types of information all quoting this office as saying there would be no wheat harvest in the Texas Panhandle. We then went to work in all possible ways to correct the false rumors and inform the combine operators and laborers the actual situation that existed in this area. This was difficult as a large number of these men had already left home, were in the fields harvesting, had no radio, were too busy to read the newspapers, and away from points to contact them by mail. We used the press, radio, and all methods of contacting these men and still were unable to contact a sufficient number of them to get all of the combines needed in this area on the date when they were needed.

The planning work conducted in the counties indicated that abnormal maturity dates within the areas would make more difficult the execution of the Harvest Program. The pattern normally is for the harvest to begin in the south and move gradually to the northwest. However, the pattern for 1945 was that the harvest began at the extreme ends of areas and progressed towards the center of each area. It was hard to get custom operators to agree to back-track from their normal movements in order to get an efficient movement of machines and labor. The section in area two, which fortunately received more winter rains than area three, did not ripen as prematurely as did the grain in area three, which resulted in numerous combines being needed in area three before harvest was complete in areas one and two.

As the result of unexpected abnormal harvest conditions there were counties in area three that did not receive all of the combines they needed for a period of five to seven days following the start of harvest. With the exception of this delay in which some counties had the temporary shortage of combines, all harvest needs were taken care of in good shape, except some labor shortage. When harvest was complete we found that there were more combines in the State than had ever made the harvest before, and the harvest season was shortened by several days, even with the tremendous increase in acreage over previous years.

The District Farm Labor Office in the execution of the program followed the general principle of referring machinery and labor to local points in the early maturing section of an area. This made it possible to get the early wheat cut in record time and put the personnel of the district office in a better position to refer machinery and labor to other areas of need as the harvest progressed. Daily or twice weekly requests and reports from county agents were used as a basis for making referral. Further information, obtained in these reports and by telephone, was used as a basis for making weekly reports of the harvest program to all county agents and to other States. Likewise, these reports were used to better coordinate the activities and movement between counties.

The district office used the State-wide radio system and the daily press to get the harvest needs before all the people within the State, when areas developed critical labor needs. This resulted in alleviating some very critical labor situations, particularly in the High Plains region.

Reports from county agents and planning groups at the close of harvest reported a total of 3,700,000 acres of wheat harvested. In addition to the wheat, 1,063,000 acres of oats, 266,000 acres of barley, and 31,000 acres of rye were harvested.

The tabulation reports from the counties show that there were 2,892 outside combines coming into their counties. Of these combine placements there were 1,605 from other Texas counties, and 1,287 placements of combines from outside Texas.

Of the total 2,338 combine referrals by the county agents and their field men, 1,767 combine referrals were made to other Texas counties, and 1,104 combine referrals were made to other States.

During this small grain season there were 11,905 labor placements and 5,923 laborers were referred to other counties and States.

It is reported by these agents that there were 962 telephone calls, 524 telegrams, and 18,064 office calls made in handling this small grain harvest program.

Custom combine operators have reported to the District Farm Labor Office that they were well pleased with the information that they obtained from any county agent's office. These men have expressed the desire that such a program be continued and that up-to-date harvest information regarding Texas counties and other States can be available to them at any county agent's office. This will enable them to plan their itinerary with the least loss of time and travel.

OKLAHOMA 1945 SMALL GRAIN HARVEST

The farm labor staff in Oklahoma spared no efforts in setting up a farm labor program to adequately care for labor needs for harvest workers in the wheat growing area, constituting some 32 major wheat growing counties. Personnel of the Extension Farm Labor Program also developed plans and procedures for working with the Agricultural Adjustment Agency in securing routing and placing combines needed to adequately take care of combine needs within the State.

In March and early April, meetings were held in these wheat growing counties with county agents and farmers to determine the amount of labor needed and the number of out-of-county combines that would be required to harvest the crop. After these meetings, each county, working through the neighborhood leaders and wheat farmers, made a survey as to the total amount of labor and combines which would be needed. The survey also included the number of combines which would be available for custom combine work in other Oklahoma counties and in other States. From this survey, it was determined that a total of some 1,200 out-of-State combines would be needed, along with some 2,000 trucks for grain hauling, and about 9,000 workers. With this information at hand, the farm labor program developed a harvest program accordingly.

To adequately take care of harvest needs from the standpoint of labor, trucks, and combines, it was decided by the farm labor staff that an office located at Clinton, Oklahoma, at the intersection of U. S. Highway No. 66 and 183, would be desirable, the city of Clinton being centrally located in the wheat growing section from both north, south, east, and west. The prime function, of course, of this office was to assist in the directing of labor, trucks, and combines to areas of need. Mr. H. C. Hyer, County Agent at Large, was in charge of this office, which was opened on May 21 and closed on July 7. Each county in the State made a telegraphic report to the Clinton office each night covering the following points: percentage of crop harvested; estimated yield of crop; skilled labor needed; common labor needed; trucks needed; combines needed; rates of pay for skilled and common labor; rates of pay for trucks and combines. County agents also included such remarks as were pertinent to the harvest program in the respective counties. With this information at hand, Mr. Hyer advised the State farm labor office by telephone of the current situation each morning. This information was broadcast by the Farm Department of radio stations KVOO at 6:45 a.m. each morning and 12:45 p.m. each afternoon, and WKY at 12:30 p.m. each day. In our opinion these radio programs served a most useful purpose in directing laborers, trucks, and combines to countis of immediate need.

In addition to the office at Clinton, it was deemed advisable, for the second consecutive year, to open a district farm labor office at Enid, the purpose of which was to keep a daily record of harvest needs and to direct workers, trucks, and combines to areas of need from Enid. This office, we feel, served a most useful purpose,

since Enid is the starting place for hundreds of wheat harvest workers. Mr. John White, Assistant Farm Management Specialist, Extension Service, Stillwater, Oklahoma, was placed in charge of this office for the second year, and he reports that 3,700 workers registered in that office for wheat harvest work. An interesting thing about the registration of workers at Enid was that 51% of the workers registered were high school boys from southeastern Missouri, western Arkansas, and eastern Oklahoma. Counties in northwest Oklahoma, within a radius of 100 miles of Enid, contacted this office by 'phone as the needs arose for referral of workers to their respective counties. Mr. White estimates that not more than one-half of wheat harvest workers, truck operators, and combine operators cleared his office, but moved of their own accord. Nevertheless, Mr. White feels that the office was of inestimable value in getting wheat harvest workers, trucks, and combines to areas of need at the time when they were needed most. Oklahoma was plagued with continuous rains and showers during the harvest and there was a great deal of shifting about of workers, trucks, and combines. At no time during the harvest did the demand for workers and trucks exceed the supply. There were a few days when more combines could have been placed had they been available, but with close contact with the Texas Farm Labor and Combine Office at Plainview, Texas, and with the Kansas Farm Labor and Combine Office at Great Bend, Kansas, combines were obtained and referred to areas of need on short order.

Prior to the starting of the wheat harvest in Oklahoma, which really got under way along the southern tier of counties the third week of May, signs were placed on all incoming highways near points where highways entered the State, referring workers, combines, and truck operators to the nearest county agent's office. These signs gave the telephone number of the nearest county agent's office, enabling the operator or worker to call county agent's office by 'phone upon his entry into the State to determine where he might be placed in the shortest possible time. In our opinion, and confirmed by county agents on border counties, these signs helped to get workers, trucks and combines placed without undue and unnecessary travel.

KANSAS 1945 SMALL GRAIN HARVEST

One of the biggest farm labor jobs in Kansas each year is that of furnishing an adequate supply of labor, custom combines and trucks to the Kansas farmer to help harvest the wheat crop. In 1945, Kansas had a seeded wheat acreage of 13,600,000 acres. Preliminary estimates showed a need for about 20,000 laborers, 2,000 combines, and 2,000 trucks from outside the wheat counties.

Each county in the wheat belt was asked to set up a local organization which would be adequate to handle the needs of the county when the harvest got under way. Labor funds were allocated to each county in an amount adequate to meet their harvest program expense. In counties where additional field help was needed, county agents employed a farm labor assistant to help handle and direct harvest labor and machines. Where additional office help was needed, a farm labor clerk was employed.

In the early part of May, a series of nine district labor meetings was held with the county agents and members of the county farm labor committee attending. Members of the State farm labor staff, the extension editor and a representative of the State AAA office discussed the various phases of the farm labor program. Plans for handling harvest labor, custom combines and trucks for the 1945 harvest were covered in detail.

During the last week of April, the assistant farm labor supervisor attended a conference and tour in Texas of the farm labor representatives of the Great Plains States. At that time, plans were outlined for cooperation between States in handling the harvest needs. In the last week of May, the assistant farm labor supervisor visited the farm labor supervisors and other extension representatives at Little Rock, Arkansas, and Columbia, Missouri, and discussed with them our needs for harvest labor and methods of procedure in recruitment of labor from those two States.

At the time of the regional farm labor conference in Kansas City in March 1945, plans were outlined for printing a map of the entire Great Plains wheat belt from Texas to Canada. Such an information sheet and map was prepared and printed by the Farm Labor Division, Extension Service, War Food Administration in Washington, D. C. Three thousand copies were made available for use in Kansas.

A Kansas custom combine operator's guide was prepared by the Kansas Extension Service and the Kansas State AAA office. Five thousand copies of this bulletin were printed by the Kansas Extension Service. Two thousand copies were turned over to the State AAA office for distribution to custom combine operators. The other copies were distributed to county agents and ports of entry for distribution to custom combine operators and others in need of information on the Kansas harvest.

All counties were urged to make a preharvest survey of harvest labor, custom combine and truck needs about two weeks before harvest. Harvest needs as shown by this survey were to be reported to the State Harvest Labor and Custom Combine Office at Great Bend, Kansas, on June 11, the date the State office was opened.

A State harvest labor and custom combine office was opened in the Court House at Great Bend, Kansas, on Monday, June 11. This office was in operation for a period of seven weeks, closing on Tuesday, July 31. All phases of recruitment, direction and placement of harvest labor, custom combines and trucks was handled through the office at Great Bend.

E. H. Leker, Assistant Farm Labor Supervisor, and two clerk-stenographers handled the work at the Great Bend office for the Kansas Extension Service during the entire period that the office was in operation. J. G. Burford, administrative assistant with the State AAA office and one clerk-stenographer handled the work for the State AAA office.

The county reports to the State office at Great Bend, on June 11, gave a preliminary estimate of the county's need for harvest labor, custom combines, and trucks. These estimates served as a guide in the preliminary recruitment program which was handled by press and radio and by contacts with the farm labor offices in other States.

A 30-minute radio program was given over radio station WIBW at Topeka, Kansas, on Friday, June 14 from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. This program originated in the State Harvest Labor office at Great Bend and was transmitted to Topeka over a wire leased for the occasion by WIBW.

Starting five days prior to the opening of harvest and continuing through the harvest period, each county was requested to send in a night letter every evening giving information on crop conditions, the date harvest would start or the progress of the harvest, the needs for men, combines, and trucks or as the harvest season advanced the number of men, combines and trucks available for other areas.

When the harvest season opened a daily chart or map was prepared showing the needs and conditions of each county. This information made it possible for the State office to direct men and machines to the areas of need by means of the telephone, telegraph, press, radio and news letters.

Each morning, the data from the night letters was first charted on the key map. On the basis of this information a news release for the Associated Press and a radio release for radio station KVGB was prepared and released by 10:30 a.m. A telegram was also prepared and sent to L. L. Longsdorf, Extension Editor at Manhattan, containing a spot announcement on harvesting needs. Mr. Longsdorf immediately forwarded this spot announcement to a number of cooperating radio stations in Kansas and adjoining States. Telephone calls were then made as seemed advisable in recruiting and directing labor and machines.

The activity of the State Harvest Labor and Custom Combine office was not confined to the State of Kansas alone. A daily working arrangement was maintained with all adjoining States. During the early part of the harvest season, labor and machines were directed to the States of Texas and Oklahoma to assist with their harvest. As the season advanced and the Kansas harvest got under way, Texas and Oklahoma reciprocated by sending men and machines to Kansas. Missouri and Arkansas supplied Kansas with many men. Nebraska, the Dakotas and other Northern States, as well as the Dominion of Canada, sent men and machines. As the season advanced and the harvest in Kansas neared completion, Kansas cooperated with Nebraska and South Dakota in directing men and machines to their States. The entire wheat harvest in the Great Plains States exemplified a spirit of cooperation.

The 1945 harvest season in Kansas was very unusual in many respects. The opening of harvest in southern Kansas was delayed at least ten days due to the late maturity of the wheat crop. During the harvest season there were many delays due to the rains and storms which covered the entire wheat belt every few days.

As a result of these continuous delays, the harvest was in full swing over the entire State at the same time except for a few of the northwest Kansas counties. This condition increased the demand for harvest labor and custom combines far in excess of the original estimates of need. In spite of these heavy demands, we were able in most cases to direct the needed men and machines to the areas of need within a very few days.

The harvest labor situation in the State was critical until Monday, July 9. The flow of men into the State during the early part of that week soon supplied our needs and the harvest labor situation was satisfactory after that time.

The combine situation, however, continued to be critical until about July 19. At that time many machines were released in the southern and central part of the State. These, along with the machines entering the State from Texas and Oklahoma, soon filled the needs of our northern and northwestern counties. We had the most difficulty in filling the needs of Stanton and Hamilton Counties in western Kansas and in being able to direct sufficient machines into the eastern part of the wheat belt along Highway 81, all the way from Sumner and Harper Counties in the south, to Republic and Jewell Counties in the north. The last counties to receive the needed combine assistance were Decatur, Norton, Phillips, Smith, and Jewell.

The truck situation in the State was never critical. During most of the season, there were surplus trucks. Very few calls for additional trucks were received until late in July when we had a relatively heavy demand for trucks from eight or ten northwest Kansas counties. These demands were satisfied in a very few days.

A brief statistical summary of activities in the State harvest office at Great Bend during the period of June 11 to July 31 is given in the following table:

Statistical Summary - Great Bend Office

Number of counties making daily reports	67
Telegrams received	1272
Telegrams sent	300
Telephone calls received	434
Telephone calls made	157
Personal letters written	563
Office calls received	1312
Number of different letters issued (circular)	38
Total number of copies mailed	8200
Number news releases	32
Number radio releases to radio station KVGB	30
Number radio spot announcements to L. L. Longsdorf, Extension Editor	29

Immediately following the completion of the 1945 wheat harvest, a questionnaire was sent to the 64 principal wheat belt counties in Kansas. In this questionnaire we asked county agents or farm labor assistants to furnish us with a record of placements made during the 1945 harvest period. These placements covered harvest labor, custom combines and trucks. In each case we asked for placements made through the county office and also for placements made through other sources or by direct contact with the farmers. The data on placements through the county office were taken from county office records. Other placements were of necessity the best available estimates.

The following table gives the total placements of labor and machines during the 1945 wheat harvest season:

RECORD OF PLACEMENTS
64 Wheat-Belt Counties Reporting

Type of placement	Placed by county offices	Other placements	Total placements
Harvest labor	12,594	9,869	22,462
Custom Combines	2,720	3,059	5,779
Trucks	2,357	2,433	4,790

One of the factors which made it possible to harvest the 1945 wheat crop was the help of custom combine operators from other States. A registration blank was prepared for registering the combines, trucks, and accompanying personnel that entered the State from the South when the Kansas harvest got under way. These blanks were placed in the hands of 16 ports of entry in southern Kansas. A number of the ports did a very fine job of registering the incoming machines and personnel. Many of the ports, however, were unable to make the registration so that a complete registration was not secured.

The following table gives an estimate of the number of combines that entered the State from the South based on registrations, estimates of port of entry operators, and other estimates where no other data were available.

COMBINES ENTERING KANSAS
FROM THE SOUTH

Port of entry	Number of combines	Port of entry	Number of combines
Arkansas City	10	Hardtner	70
South Haven	50	Coldwater	125
Caldwell	250	Sitka	500
Bluff City	20	Englewood	200
Anthony	25	Meade	30
Waldron	10	Liberal	1400
Crisfield	10	Hugoton	20
Kiowa	175	Elkhart	250

Total 3145

It is estimated that about 525 Kansas machines went South and then returned for the harvest in the State. An equal number probably went on North for the harvest. The custom combines entering the State from the South represent only a part of the outside machines which assisted with the Kansas harvest. About 500 machines entered the State at other points. Most of these machines came from the States to the North of Kansas, including about 250 from the Dominion of Canada. Records on the State of origin, of about half the out-of-State combines entering from the South, indicate that 45 percent are from Oklahoma, 29 percent from Texas, 5 percent from Nebraska, 4 percent from Minnesota, 3 percent from each of Colorado, South Dakota, and Canada, 2 percent from each of North Dakota and Missouri, 1 percent from each of Iowa and Montana, and 2 percent from other States.

A record of 424 outfits entering the State gives a good indication as to the number of combines in each outfit. It shows 306 outfits with one combine, 88 with two, 19 with three, 8 with four, and 3 with five. This ratio will probably be representative of all crews entering the State. There were a few outfits entering the State from Canada that included a larger number of machines. One outfit in particular had 13 combines in one group.

The ratio of combines to trucks and men in the various outfits is shown on records taken from registrations made at ports of entry. This record shows the following: Combines 561, trucks 605, personnel 1364.

This record shows the number of trucks is slightly in excess of the number of combines and that the personnel for each combine runs about $2\frac{1}{2}$ men per combine.

NEBRASKA 1945 SMALL GRAIN HARVEST

The Nebraska small grain harvest was late when compared to the normal date for beginning harvesting wheat in Nebraska. A comparison of the 1945 actual date and the normal date of the wheat harvest by areas is as follows:

Area	Normal date	1945 actual date
17	July 5	July 12
14	July 10	July 14
16	July 10	July 16
19	July 15	July 20
15	July 20	July 25

The summary made by the county extension agents of county needs for the 1945 small grain harvest showed that Nebraska would need from outside of the State 6,409 transient workers and 920 combines. These needs begin in southeastern counties and increase in counties along the Kansas border and also in the Panhandle counties. The counties needing the greatest number of transient workers and combines were Adams, Clay, Furnas, Red Willow, Chase, Perkins, Keith, Deuel Cheyenne, Kimball, Morrill, Box Butte, and Sheridan.

The Nebraska small grain harvest labor office was located in the county extension office at McCook, Nebraska, Red Willow County, 235 miles southwest of Lincoln, Nebraska. This office opened on July 6 with Mr. Owen Burton in charge. County extension agents had been notified that the McCook office would want to know their labor needs probably three to six days in advance. The first report made to the McCook labor office was on

July 7. On July 9, 22 counties reported that three days later they would need 161 workers, 47 trucks, and 58 combines.

Needs on later dates were:

July 16 - 222 workers, 58 combines, and 11 trucks.
July 17 - 416 workers, 108 combines, and 33 trucks.
July 18 - 482 workers, 244 combines, and 49 trucks.
July 19 - 577 workers, 247 combines, and 49 trucks.
July 20 - 1221 workers, 293 combines, and 27 trucks.

On July 20, very few workers or combines had been received from Kansas and we asked Mr. Leker to release workers and combines that had been delayed in Kansas due to rains. This he began to do on July 23, but our demands also increased on July 23. The need was for 1,284 workers, about 350 combines and 50 trucks. In four or five days workers, trucks, and combines came so rapidly that on July 29 the need was for 235 workers, 80 combines, and 5 trucks.

On July 31 there were a few surplus workers, trucks, and combines in western Nebraska and this continued until harvest was completed about August 20. Rain delayed the harvest in the Panhandle counties and some wheat was not cut. This was also true in York, Polk, Platte, and Butler Counties in central Nebraska. No large amount was lost. On August 1, Nebraska opened the labor office at Alliance and closed the one at McCook. This was done to better serve South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana.

If the rains had not delayed the small grain harvest in Kansas, the demands of Nebraska would have been met as soon as the calls had been received, but from July 12 to July 23 demands greatly exceeded the supply. The rains coming during the harvest period in the Panhandle counties delayed their harvest and South Dakota had a few uneasy days.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Plans should be made early for a similar program for the 1946 harvest. In general, the same procedures should be followed as in 1945.

2. The harvest area map was appreciated by operator and workers. Some adjustments in areas and harvest dates as States deem advisable may need to be made. Names and locations of principal towns should be indicated as custom machine operators and harvest hands are more familiar with towns than counties.

3. Each State should have, according to the size of the program, a man or two to act as a field man for the State and district offices during the actual harvest season. This personnel should be constantly on the road to check on emergency situations as they arise, and to assist in the orderly flow of men and

machines, both to counties and areas where needed and to keep them from going where they are not needed. This cannot be done solely by telephone or letter to the counties from the State office.

4. More satisfactory arrangements can be made in towns along the principal highways for adequate parking of machines when en route.

5. Adequate eating places should be arranged for in advance although the amount of food available will probably not be a problem in 1946.

6. Visits to adjoining State offices by the farm labor assistants handling the harvest program, preliminary to their own State programs have helped materially in the conduct of their own programs and in the coordination of the program between States.

Attachment